

# *News Clippings*

*2/20/08*

## **FLOODING**

### **Delphi**

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# Carroll County Comet

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## River dweller upset about source of flood relief funds

By Kevin Schnepf Staff writer



**Moving up Gene Rossetter stands in front of his flood-damaged home as workers he hired move it to higher ground away from the Tippecanoe River. Rossetter said he felt Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) should have foreseen the need to release more water ahead of recent storms that caused flooding. "They used to do it all the time," he explained. "I don't know why they stopped, but it's a big problem for those below the dam." He said he received a check from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to rebuild but was not going to use taxpayers' money for the work until it was moved to a safer location. "I'm going to move my house before NIPSCO causes it to get flooded again," Rossetter said Friday. "I feel bad using taxpayers' hardearned money when NIPSCO caused the problem. It's the same for a lot of us along the river. It'll just happen again if something isn't done." Comet photo by Kevin Schnepf**

It isn't that Carroll County resident Gene Rossetter doesn't appreciate the government's generosity - he simply doesn't think taxpayers should have to pay for others' mistakes.

Rossetter owns property on the Tippecanoe River near CR525W. He said his grandfather purchased the land in 1932 and began to build homes for family members there in 1940. He said family still stays in other dwellings on the property during the year.

Rossetter's home was situated on the bank of the river until last week, but he paid to have it moved a quarter of a mile from the river after recent record flooding damaged his home. He said he did so because he wanted to keep from having his home condemned at the will of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and he was concerned about where the money came to pay for the damage.

"I was told by (Carroll County Zoning Administrator) Dale Huffer my home could be condemned if damage was over 50 percent of the home's assessed value," Rossetter explained to the *Comet*. "They can't do that. I'm going to move my house before the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) causes it to get flooded again."

Rossetter said he was grateful for a check he received from FEMA to repair his home, but felt the burden should not have been placed on taxpayers' shoulders. He maintained that NIPSCO created the record flood

by not operating the gates in a responsible manner.

"They (NIPSCO) used to let out water to prepare for rising levels," he said. "Why did it stop, what changed this, and why is FEMA giving away taxpayers' money because of a NIPSCO mistake?"

Rossetter said he greatly appreciated the financial help to build his home and did not use any of it to move the house. He said not he or any other "river rat" should have been put in the situation in the first place.

"The money will be spent on this house after I move it," he stated. "There are a lot of people who live up and down this river who need help and future protection. None of them should have had to go to FEMA for assistance, but they will need help and future protection."

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## **Highway Department**

According to Francis, more than \$100,000 has been spent for flood-related clean-up activities by his department. He said the work is not yet finished.

Francis provided a breakdown of expenses. He said as of Friday, \$11,773.11 was spent on landfill costs, \$1,978 for transfer station fees, \$12,867.26 for fuel and \$10,519.95 for 1,631 tons of material to repair 30 damaged roads. In addition, the cost to repair seven damaged hard-surfaced roads was \$7,500 and one culvert repair not yet fully calculated but \$24,100 has been spent on it to date. Labor costs equal \$34,588.54, which is not FEMA reimbursable. Francis reported the grand total cost of flood-related expenses to the county is \$103,326.86. He said the highway department will continue to remove debris from roadways for two more weeks before taking requests on a case-by-case basis.

"This is not a rosey picture," he said.

Francis said he hopes to be able to use Major Moves money and funds from the roads and streets accounts to pay for the road work and repairs. He said he will ask the council to grant an additional appropriation until FEMA reimbursement is received. He said he expected all costs associated with the flood, except for labor costs, to be fully reimbursed.

The highway department received permission to proceed with a plan to improve a private access road off of CR1225W as an emergency access road in case of another flood. Francis said the only way out of one flooded area is to travel toward the river before reaching safer ground.

Francis was directed to work with the land owner to reach an agreement.

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# *Carroll County Comet*

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## **Flood relief efforts continue**

### **Comet staff report**

Residents of Carroll and surrounding counties affected by recent floods could be eligible for relief benefits from several sources.

### **Disaster unemployment assistance available**

FEMA announced in a Public Service Announcement Thursday that residents of Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White counties may be eligible for disaster unemployment assistance. Residents out of work as a result of recent flooding and storms are urged to contact the nearest Indiana Department of Workforce Development Work One Center before March 7.

### **Mitigation teams to offer cleanup advice**

Mitigation specialists will offer building tips which make homes more resistant to storms and flooding to Carroll County residents Feb. 25 and 26 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Wallmann's Grocery Store on E. Franklin Street in Delphi. The special team is sponsored by FEMA in cooperation with local businesses, building supply centers and relief agencies.

"Everyone is invited and we urge all to attend, including homeowners, building contractors and architects," FEMA mitigation specialist Michael Klitzke said. "Information provided includes cleanup and repair techniques for flooded homes, how to prevent mold growth, ways to flood-proof your home and how to buy flood insurance."

### **Red Cross offers mental health service**

The American Red Cross is on standby to provide free Disaster Mental Health Services (DMHS) to anyone who needs it in the wake of flooding. Red Cross representatives said special effort has been made in areas that have now flooded twice.

Those in need of the service should call their local Red Cross chapter, located at 615 N. 18th St. in Lafayette, at (765) 742- 6975 for information.

"These residents are exhausted, frustrated and many want to give up," Barb Scott, Disaster Mental Health Manager said. "We want them to know that somebody cares, that they're not alone and that we're there to listen, even if they just want to vent."

The Red Cross provides mental health support to those affected by disasters, whether they have disaster-caused damage, reside in the disaster-affected area, are relatives of those affected or have disaster-related emotional difficulties created by mass media exposure.

Mental health support also extends to Red Cross workers assigned to a disaster relief operation and their families. Such assistance includes education about stressors, their effects and methods of coping, advocacy, crisis intervention and referral services to meet mental health-related problems.

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# *Carroll County Comet*

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## Keeping the city on target for the highway

By Debbie Lowe Staff writer

Delphi Board of Works entered into a contract with Hannum, Wagle & Cline Engineering to aid the city with connectivity issues related to the Hoosier Heartland Highway. The contract will not exceed \$17,500.

According to firm representative Brian Pohlar, the engineering firm will help the city through the relinquishment process, such as paving, drainage and city utilities.

"We want to make sure the city is protected," he told the board at the Monday afternoon meeting.

"We want to go into this understanding everything we can," Delphi Mayor Randy Stasser said.

Pohlar said other issues such as lighting and streetscapes would be addressed with the Indiana Department of Transportation. He said the city could be eligible for a federal aid program to help pay for improvements with 80/20 funding programs. He said negotiations could lead to reduction of the local match.

### **Other business**

Strasser reported a "minor failure" with one flood control gate at the canal during the last flood event. He said the flooding level was equal to the 2003 flood at the canal and in the nearby trailer park. He said as soon as the weather was better, the already-diagnosed flood-gate problem would be repaired.

The next meeting will be March 3 at 6:30 p.m.

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